

EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

136TH AIRLIFT WING, TEXAS NATIONAL GUARD FAMILY READINESS TEAM

HON. MICHAEL C. BURGESS

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, January 4, 2005

Mr. BURGESS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor a dedicated group of individuals who have devoted their time and energy to supporting our brave soldiers—136th Airlift Wing, Texas National Guard Family Readiness Team.

The Family Readiness Team's mission is to assist units as they support the families of members of the 136th Airlift Wing during peacetime and times of training or mobilization. The Team provides multiple levels of care and assistance. They send a personal greeting card to any member upon request; establish and facilitate ongoing communication, involvement, support, and recognition between National Guard families and the National Guard in a partnership that promotes the best in both; and provide all Air Force families assistance and support before, during and after times of local or national emergencies/disasters, mobilization, deployment/separation or evacuation. The Family Readiness Team has a Chaplain's Staff available to comfort and encourage hope for the families of our deployed troops as well as those troops providing home station sustainment.

My son was a member of the Texas Air National Guard, and I have found that working with the Family Readiness Team, located in Fort Worth, Texas, has been rewarding. There are opportunities for family members to assist their loved ones by attending meetings on base and promoting fellowship with other families. The Texas Air National Guard Family Readiness Team is part of a National Guard Family Program which works to connect people across America. I applaud the great work of the 136th Airlift Wing Family Readiness Team, and I look forward to continuing and supporting this organization in the years to come.

DELIVERING HIGH-QUALITY CARE
TO VETERANS

HON. BERNARD SANDERS

OF VERMONT

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, January 4, 2005

Mr. SANDERS. Mr. Speaker, I am proud to rise in praise of the White River Junction Veterans Administration Medical Center, which has received the Robert W. Carey Trophy Award for Organizational Excellence. This award, named after a former Secretary of Veterans Affairs, was presented to recognize the

truly excellent care that the White River VA Center provides to veterans in Vermont and the Connecticut River Valley. This award is the highest quality award the Department of Veterans Affairs can bestow.

In the two previous years, the White River VA Center was recognized for excellence for the quality of its care by winning back-to-back Carey Achievement Awards. This year it took the top award in the nation.

Under the leadership of Gary De Gasta, the staff at the center—doctors, nurses, health professionals, administrative support—are committed to providing the very best in health care. They are attentive to veterans and their needs; they offer state-of-the-art medical care; they honor the service of the brave men and women who answered, and answer, our nation's call decade after decade.

I am very proud of the excellent work done by those who work at the White River VA Center. They are deserving of this highest of commendations, and we in Vermont are very proud of them. We are equally proud that this high level of performance helps to deliver the very best in health care to our veterans.

INTRODUCING THE PARENTAL
CONSENT ACT

HON. RON PAUL

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, January 4, 2005

Mr. PAUL. Mr. Speaker, I rise to introduce the Parental Consent Act. This bill forbids Federal funds from being used for any universal or mandatory mental-health screening of students without the express, written, voluntary, informed consent of their parents or legal guardians. This bill protects the fundamental right of parents to direct and control the upbringing and education of their children.

The New Freedom Commission on Mental Health has recommended that the Federal and State Governments work toward the implementation of a comprehensive system of mental-health screening for all Americans. The commission recommends that universal or mandatory mental-health screening first be implemented in public schools as a prelude to expanding it to the general public. However, neither the commission's report nor any related mental-health screening proposal requires parental consent before a child is subjected to mental-health screening. Federally-funded universal or mandatory mental health screening in schools without parental consent could lead to labeling more children as "ADD" or "hyperactive" and thus force more children to take psychotropic drugs, such as Ritalin, against their parents' wishes.

Already, too many children are suffering from being prescribed psychotropic drugs for nothing more than children's typical rambunc-

tious behavior. According to the Journal of the American Medical Association, there was a 300 percent increase in psychotropic drug use in two- to four-year-old children from 1991 to 1995.

Many children have suffered harmful side effects from using psychotropic drugs. Some of the possible side effects include mania, violence, dependence, and weight gain. Yet, parents are already being threatened with child abuse charges if they resist efforts to drug their children.

Imagine how much easier it will be to drug children against their parents' wishes if a federally-funded mental-health screener makes the recommendation.

Universal or mandatory mental-health screening could also provide a justification for stigmatizing children from families that support traditional values. Even the authors of mental-health diagnosis manuals admit that mental-health diagnoses are subjective and based on social constructions. Therefore, it is all too easy for a psychiatrist to label a person's disagreement with the psychiatrist's political beliefs a mental disorder. For example, a federally-funded school violence prevention program lists "intolerance" as a mental problem that may lead to school violence. Because "intolerance" is often a code word for believing in traditional values, children who share their parents' values could be labeled as having mental problems and a risk of causing violence. If the mandatory mental-health screening program applies to adults, everyone who believes in traditional values could have his or her beliefs stigmatized as a sign of a mental disorder. Taxpayer dollars should not support programs that may label those who adhere to traditional values as having a "mental disorder."

Mr. Speaker, universal or mandatory mental-health screening threatens to undermine parents' right to raise their children as the parents see fit. Forced mental-health screening could also endanger the health of children by leading to more children being improperly placed on psychotropic drugs, such as Ritalin, or stigmatized as "mentally ill" or a risk of causing violence because they adhere to traditional values. Congress has a responsibility to the nation's parents and children to stop this from happening. I, therefore, urge my colleagues to cosponsor the Parental Consent Act.

INTRODUCTION OF THE "PRO USE
ACT"

HON. JOHN CONYERS, JR.

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, January 4, 2005

Mr. CONYERS. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to announce the introduction of the "PRO USE

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Matter set in this typeface indicates words inserted or appended, rather than spoken, by a Member of the House on the floor.